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ABSTRACT

The multicultural worlds of childhood in postmodern American present challenges and opportunities for the early childhood curriculum. This chapter explores the historical context of multicultural America and the possibility of an early childhood critical multicultural curriculum with "border crossings," or transversing subject-area disciplinary boundaries. The chapter discusses salient multicultural theoretical paradigms capable of informing the field and reviews how selected children's literature is organized around issues of multiculturalism. The chapter explores how America's historical context relates to multiculturalism and the early childhood education curriculum and maintains that, in spite of civil rights progress, hate group organizations remain an integral part of the United States. A variety of theories of multicultural education and about multiculturalism are examined for their capability of informing early childhood education, including an anthropological perspective, the cultural invasion process, the threshold hypothesis, issues of power, various approaches to multicultural education, the role of social action, ethnicity theory, and typologies of multiculturalism. The chapter also identifies and explores five areas of research and literature applicable to multiculturalism and young children: (1) child development; (2) qualitative interpretive research; (3) bilingual/bicultural research; (4) advocacy research and literature; and (5) reconceptualizing models. Finally, the chapter considers how early childhood education can advocate for equity and social justice and describes selected Native American children's literature that can help ameliorate the concerns that competitive, consumer-driven childrearing practices have produced. The chapter concludes by noting that a spirit of mutual caring is key to eliminating many complex problems children face. (Contains approximately 90 references.) (KB)

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CHAPTER 10

The Multicultural Worlds of Childhood in Postmodern America

LOURDES DIAZ SOTO

> True peace is not merely the absence of tension; it is the presence of justice.
> —Martin Luther King, Jr., Letter from a Birmingham Jail

IN THE "MULTICULTURAL worlds of childhood," in postmodern America, a landscape is emerging that includes both challenges and opportunity for the early childhood curriculum. The challenges are an integral part of the historical and contemporary context of our nation. The opportunity is heralded by the voices of children, families, early childhood advocates, critical researchers, and decades of multicultural wisdom keepers.

How is it possible for young children to begin to make sense of the contemporary multicultural worlds of childhood that include *Mother Goose, Mighty Morphin Power Rangers,* martial arts video games, Barbie dolls, the dismantling of affirmative action, and the bombing in Oklahoma City? How do the research literature and contemporary events in our nation help to inform the field of early childhood education?

Madhu (pseudonym), a student of color in one of our graduate seminars, relayed a scenario that reminded us of just how crucial it is for early childhood educators to critically analyze issues of race, power, equity, social justice, socioeconomic class, and gender. Madhu is a mature graduate student and loving mother who volunteers at a local day care center. She described how White children in the center have rejected her attempts to nurture them. "Don't touch me!" "Get away from me!" She has inter-

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Amy Detjen

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preted these incidents as relating to her skin color, since one child rubbed and tried to "clean his skin" after he fell and she tried to comfort him. For Madhu, these experiences have been reminiscent of the caste system in India, where the untouchables have been regarded as unclean. The research and this recent incident show how at an early age young children attain ethnocentric tendencies. The early childhood curriculum can provide an optimal space capable of affecting young children's daily lived realities.

In this chapter I explore the complexity of the historical context of multicultural America and the possibility of an early childhood critical multicultural curriculum with *border crossings*. Salient multicultural theoretical paradigms capable of informing the field of early childhood education are included in this discussion, as well as a brief review of how selected early childhood education literature is organized around issues of multiculturalism.

THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT

How does America's historical context relate to multiculturalism and the early childhood education curriculum? Our nation has a sad history of intolerance and oppression, as exemplified by the Massachusetts Colony's anti-Quaker provisions; the removal of the Cherokees from Georgia, later known as the Trail of Tears; the U.S. Constitution's definition of a slave as the equivalent to three-fifths of a free man; violence in Philadelphia, the city of "brotherly love," against Catholics, Irish, and African Americans; the Chinese exclusion laws in California that were not repealed until 1952; the Japanese internment camps; the Indian wars; the myth of a Jewish conspiracy and continued anti-Semitism; the lynching and killing of Tejanos; the refusal of the Three Rivers community to bury Felix Longoria, a Tejano killed in the line of duty; the Ku Klux Klan's (KKK) reign of terror; a former grand dragon of the KKK, David Duke, running for the presidency of the United States; and the fact that today gays and lesbians are the most frequent target of hate crimes (Carnes, 1995).

In spite of progress with civil rights, the Southern Poverty Law Center documents how skinhead, Ku Klux Klan, and neo-Nazi organizations are an integral part of our nation, with more than 300 hate groups scattered throughout America actively recruiting members. Between 1990 and 1993 alone there were 108 bias-motivated murders, thousands of assaults, cross-burnings, and acts of violence and intimidation. In addition, Jim Carnes (1995) found that in a 1992 survey of high school students, 30% said they would participate in racist incidents and 17% said

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they would silently support them. To Carnes, "These numbers suggest that we still have much to learn from the bitter harvests of our past—that our democracy is still a work in progress" (p. 128).

In the United States today, powerful voices of an increasingly mean-spirited political agenda disregard the needs of young children. When early childhood educators view, examine, and critique how issues of power are affecting their lives and children's lives, they will also see the need to map an early childhood utopian dream in solidarity. As Maxine Greene (1996) notes:

> Perhaps we might begin by releasing our imaginations and summoning up the traditions of freedom in which most of us were reared. We might try to make audible again the recurrent calls for justice and equality. (p. 28)

The Children's Defense Fund (1996) shows that 15.3 million children live in poverty. Our youngest children comprise the poorest children (one out of every four children younger than 6 years old), while the richest one-fifth of American families received 11 times as much income as the poorest one-fifth. This constitutes the widest economic gap in our nation since 1947. The child poverty rates in the United States are the highest among 18 industrialized countries.

Poor children, bilingual children, immigrant children, and women are caught in our nation's politically conservative net: California continues to approve mean-spirited propositions (Proposition 186, Proposition 209); presidential candidates openly support English-only measures; a Texas judge seriously considers taking a child away from a native-Spanish-language-speaking mother; conservative radio talk-show host Rush Limbaugh continues his relentless attacks on women, calling us "femme-Nazis" while denigrating and objectifying people of color. All of these attacks continue until our lives are ridiculed, dehumanized, and devalued. As Henry Giroux (1995) maintains, our nation is experiencing a popular construction of a "national identity that is read as white, heterosexual, middle class, and allegedly threatened by contamination from cultural, linguistic, racial, and sexual differences" (p. 48).

Many of our young children growing up at the gate of the new millennium find themselves immersed in an education that may appear far removed from their daily realities. In *Savage Inequalities*, Jonathan Kozol (1991), for example, relates:

> Nearly 1,000 infants die within these very poor Chicago neighborhoods each year. An additional 3,000 infants are delivered brain damaged or with other forms of neurological impairment. But entering a kindergarten classroom

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> this autumn morning, one would have no sense that anything was wrong. . . .
>
> In a somewhat mechanical way, the teacher lifts a picture book of *Mother Goose* and flips the pages as the children sit before her. . . . Mary is white. Old Mother Hubbard is white. Jack is white. Jill is white. Little Jack Horner is white. Mother Goose is white. Only Mother Hubbard's dog is black. "Baa, baa, black sheep," the teacher read. "have you any wool?" the children answer: "Yessir, yessir, three bags full. One for my master. . ."
>
> The master is white. The sheep are black. (pp. 43–45)

How do young children make sense of the education provided by professionals in schools, by families at home, and by their communities? The intersections and multiple complexities among issues of race, poverty, gender, and religion are depicted in James McBride's (1996) *The Color of Water.* This oral history depicts a black child growing up with 11 black siblings and a white Jewish mother, the daughter of an Orthodox Jewish rabbi. James tried to make sense of his "multicultural worlds of childhood" and asked his mother:

> "Does he [God] like black people or white people better?" "He loves all people. He's a spirit," she responded. "What color is God's spirit?" he asked. "It doesn't have a color," she said. "God is the color of water. Water doesn't have a color." (p. 51)

In James McBride's home, "the question of race was like the power of the moon" (p. 94).

MULTICULTURAL THEORETICAL PARADIGMS

What are salient examples of multicultural theoretical paradigms capable of informing the field of early childhood education? Theories in multicultural education and about multiculturalism emanate from a variety of fields and perspectives. John Ogbu (1982, 1987, 1988), for example, pursues an anthropological perspective and reflects proponents of the research theory that views society as organized into systems that privilege the dominant group. This research examines relationships among institutions and schools that create distinctions among dominant and "minority" groups leading to social inequality. Ogbu describes voluntary, involuntary, and caste-like minority groups and sees the need for reform at a variety of levels, including the school and the community.

Paulo Freire's (1985, 1970/1996) work explains why the "banking concept" of education is erroneous. Such a mechanistic model of repeti-

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tion and memorization needs to be replaced with a problem-posing concept whereby learners are viewed within a humanistic curriculum. He describes "cultural invasion" where "invaders penetrate the cultural context of another group, in disrespect of the latter's potentialities; they impose their own view of the world upon those they invade and inhibit the creativity of the invaded by curbing their expression" (1996, p. 133). His reflections are crucial to our understanding of how power affects the lives of young children in postmodern America.

Jim Cummins' (1996) extensive research with linguistically and culturally diverse learners has helped us to gain insights into young children's educational needs. The "threshold hypothesis," for example, helps early childhood educators understand that there may be levels of proficiency children must attain in order to reap the benefits of bilingualism and biliteracy. The issue of power is highlighted by Cummins, who distinguishes between "collaborative" and "coercive" power, where the latter is imposed to the detriment of a subordinate group while the former is generated in interpersonal and intergroup relations.

Christine Sleeter and Carl Grant (1988) describe various approaches available in multicultural education, including their own choice that integrates issues of race, class, and gender. The five approaches described by Sleeter and Grant include: (1) teaching the exceptional and culturally different; (2) human relations approach; (3) ethnic studies, women's studies, labor studies; (4) multicultural education approach; and (5) education that is multicultural and social-reconstructionist.

Education that is multicultural and social-reconstructionist extends the multicultural curriculum "into the realm of social action and focuses at least as much on challenging existing social stratification as on celebrating human diversity and equal opportunity" (p. 28). An education that is multicultural and social-reconstructionist has been recommended in the past decade by early childhood educators for, among others, day-care settings (Swadener, 1988), infant and toddler settings (Whaley & Swadener, 1990), and teacher education (Soto & Richardson, 1995).

The stages of ethnicity theory developed by James Banks (1993) relay a paradigm focusing on cultural and racial choices. This theory emphasizes differences and has the potential for assisting with interpretations of racial attitudes and self-perceptions. The stages assume a hierarchical progression from a place of negative beliefs and stereotypes to a place of positive identification of skills and knowledge. Banks lists the following stages: (1) cultural psychological captivity, (2) cultural encapsulation stage, (3) cultural identity clarification, (4) biculturalism, (5) multiculturalism and reflective nationalism, and (6) globalism and global com-

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petency. Banks draws connections between the research depicting the origins of racial attitudes and his theory.

Joe Kincheloe and Shirley Steinberg (1998), influenced by McLaren and Morris's (1997) work, describe five typologies of multiculturalism, including "critical multiculturalism." This critical analysis emphasizes the importance of power as an integral part of multiculturalism and examines the meaning of multiculturalism:

> Multiculturalism means everything yet at the same time nothing . . . While we cannot be sure of what individuals are suggesting when they employ the term multiculturalism, we can reasonably guess that they are alluding to at least one of the following issues: race, socio-economic class, gender, language, culture, sexual preference, or disability. . . . In public conversation, multiculturalism is a term used as a code word for race. (p. 1)

The five types of multiculturalism described by Kincheloe and Steinberg include the following:

1. Conservative multiculturalism/monoculturalism is the belief in the superiority of Western traditions and a form of neocolonialism that embraces white male supremacy and blames anyone falling outside the "boundaries of the white, male, middle/upper-middle class" (p. 3).
2. Liberal multiculturalism embraces the notion of color-blindness and the idea that we should work toward a community where there is one race—the human race. Proponents of liberal multiculturalism believe we share a natural equality and common humanity, yet this exclusive concern for sameness neglects the power exerted by forces that undermine the democratic process.
3. Pluralistic multiculturalism, unlike the liberal focus on sameness, focuses on differences. In pluralistic multiculturalism learners are expected to develop "multicultural literacy," diversity is valued, and there is less emphasis on assimilation. Pluralistic multiculturalism has obtained intellectual respectability yet leaves issues of inequity intact.
4. Left essentialist multiculturalism includes an analysis of how essentialism (belief in unchanging properties) within multiculturalism subverts differences within categories such as race and gender. The left essentialist multiculturalism disregards the idea that identity formation is a dynamic process that is socially constructed, shifting, and unstable.
5. Critical multiculturalism is influenced by the critical theorists who focused on power and domination at the Frankfurt School of Social Re-

> search. Critical theorists promote self-reflection and consciousness about the etiology of political opinions, gender roles, racial images, social class, and beliefs. Critical multiculturalists strive for egalitarianism, work in solidarity toward the elimination of human suffering, expose the hidden "curriculum" that oppresses many and privileges few, and seek diversity "that understands the power of difference when it is conceptualized within a larger concern with social justice" (p. 34).

In *Bilingual Education: A Dialogue with the Bakhtin Circle*, Marcia Moraes (1996) proposes "dialogic-critical pedagogy" as a means of moving the oppressed and the oppressors toward emancipatory democracy:

> We need to construct a dialogic-critical pedagogy that takes as its founding objective a living dialogue between oppressed and oppressors from which both groups can understand the social constraints. . . . It is within such a dialogic-critical pedagogy that we can think about individual emancipation and also about collective transformation. (p. 113)

Moraes, like Giroux (1986), relies on the theoretical frameworks of the Bakhtin circle and Paulo Freire. Giroux in his analysis notes how the dominant educational discourses, namely liberal and conservative, "fail to analyze how the school as an agent of social and cultural control is mediated and contested by those whose interest it does not serve" (p. 57).

Each of the theories and typologies offers opportunities for the early childhood education curriculum. Freire's (1985; 1970/1996) work, for example, highlights the process of cultural invasion and the need for a problem-posing project. Jim Cummins' (1996) work helps us to further analyze issues of power and to value children's home languages and home cultures. Sleeter and Grant's (1988) work moves the practitioner beyond rhetoric to a place of social action. Banks' (1993) work is helpful by drawing connections between the research depicting the origins of racial attitudes and how young children begin to make sense of their world. Kincheloe and Steinberg's (1998) work provides information about both the complexities and the possibilities present in the field of multiculturalism. Moraes' (1996) work can challenge the field to initiate new directions for dialogue "from the margins and from the center," leading to the emancipatory place envisioned by Martin Luther King, Jr., and referred to by Giroux (1986) as the "politics of human dignity."

MULTICULTURAL RESEARCH AREAS

How is the early childhood education literature related to issues of multiculturalism? The research initiated over half a century ago examining racial and ethnic attitudes of young children has consistently shown that young children not only are aware of racial and ethnic differences but also have also internalized the views of their society (Banks, 1993). The pioneering research of the 1920s and 1930s indicated that racial attitudes are initiated during the earliest years of a child's life. In this sense it has taken a whole "oppressive village" to systematically educate young children to internalize the emotional components of racism. At the same time, these research projects help make the case that early childhood education is truly a window of opportunity for multicultural education.

Banks in his review of racial and ethnic attitudes and their modification found that preschool and kindergarten African American children often make out-group preferences while most White children make own-group racial preferences. This research shows that young White children hold ethnocentric attitudes and express negative attitudes toward other racial and ethnic groups beginning at age 4. The intervention studies Banks reviewed show that the research on children is much more hopeful than the intervention research on adults. Since the evidence indicates that it is increasingly difficult to influence the attitudes of children as they grow older, clearly "early childhood educators have the best opportunity to positively influence the racial and ethnic attitudes of children" (p. 244).

Just as the theories in the field of multicultural education have been informed by a variety of disciplines, so has the literature examining multiculturalism and young children. The paradigms viewing young children and multiculturalism are multiple and complex and have overlapping spheres. For the purposes of this discussion, however, I will identify five areas of research (and literature): (1) child development paradigms; (2) qualitative interpretive research paradigms; (3) bilingual/bicultural research; (4) advocacy research and literature; and (5) reconceptualizing models.

Child Development Paradigms

Child development paradigms have a longstanding tradition in early childhood education, based largely on the field of psychology and child development. Most of the published research in the scholarly journals in the field of early childhood education falls into these paradigms with largely quantifiable, predetermined hypotheses and discrete point data.

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Readers interested in these paradigms are referred to the "Special issue on minority children" of *Child Development* (1990, vol. 61, no. 2). This special issue views developmental outcomes, identity processes, school achievement, child-rearing practices, and the psychosocial experiences of "disadvantaged minority mothers." McLoyd (1990) points to the "gap" in our knowledge and to the need for diverse scholars and additional research funds.

Genishi and Fassler note the need for early childhood programs that are both multicultural and developmentally appropriate, as well as the need to take into account the nature of the learner (see Chapter 3, this volume). Since in this approach the teacher's expertise is valued, it stands to reason that we need to critically examine how we think about teacher education in the field and the existing knowledge that informs the field.

The contributions to the field by the child development paradigms are abundant; but as Block (1992) points out, the century-long domination of the psychological and child development perspective in the field has meant a lack of recognition or acceptance of alternative theoretical and methodological perspectives.

> The terms "critical theory," "interpretivist or symbolic research", or "postmodern" are rarely heard in seminar rooms, publications, or conferences focusing on early childhood education. . . . The few scholars who identify with both these perspectives *and* early childhood education have called for and created their own forums for discussion of these issues. (p. 3)

The child development paradigms include writings viewing developmentally appropriate practice (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997) and the Piagetian stages of children's growth and development (Piaget, 1970, 1977). Much of this literature has been "taken-for-granted" knowledge that is rarely critiqued, and only recently have issues of language and culture been integrated as a part of what Michael Apple refers to as the "politics of cultural incorporation," where dominance is maintained with a process of compromise and "mentioning" (discussed in Lubeck, 1994). (For a critical analysis of developmentally appropriate practices, see Jipson [1991] and Lubeck [1994].)

At the 1996 annual conference of the National Association of Education for Young Children (NAEYC), Piaget's decades of research were celebrated upon the hundredth anniversary of his birth. In conjunction, the National Association of Early Childhood Teacher Educators engaged a panel on discussions of the constructivist paradigms. In response, in a multicultural critique of the Piagetian and post-Piagetian constructivist paradigms, I challenged the field to move beyond the scientific and bio-

logically derived origins of the Piagetian perspective toward a "critical constructivist paradigm" that examines issues of power and pursues a utopian early childhood dream of equity and social justice (Soto, 1997a).

In spite of Piaget's remarkable research for over half a century, the genetic epistemology of these writings is evidenced by the language included in the descriptions of "the individual," "the organism," "the assimilation," and "the biological." Piaget's early work showed his biologist's credentials as he demonstrated a fascination for *limnaea stagnalis* (snails), which helps to explain his interpretation of the mechanism of "equilibration."

Although Piaget did not completely overlook social elements, recent research has helped us to gain additional understandings about children's cognitive development (Fosnot, 1996; Lambert et al., 1995; Perret-Clermont, Perret, & Bell, 1991; Resnick, Levine, & Teasley, 1991; Wertsch, 1991). The work conducted by Perret-Clermot observed children to progress from one Piagetian stage to another in a very short time (5 to 10 minutes). Contemporary biologists also note that the biological and the social are not separate but complementary (Lewontin, Rose, & Kamin, 1984). Recent research (Cobb, Yackel, & Wood, 1992) is demonstrating that we cannot understand cognition without observing the interaction within a context, within a culture. Yet as Kincheloe and Steinberg (1996) note in their theory of postformalism: "Developmental psychological principles have become so much a part of teacher education programs that it is hard to see where questions about them might arise" (p. 171).

Vygotsky's emphasis on the sociohistorical aspect of knowledge is an important contribution to this knowledge base. Vygotsky, like Piaget, believed in the idea that learning is developmental but distinguished between "spontaneous" (pseudo, naturally occurring) and "scientific" (structured learning activity) concepts. His now-famous ideas include, among others, the "zone of proximal development," the formation of inner speech, and dialogue. Bruner extended Vygotsky's work with the notion of "scaffolding." Although not all constructivists agree with these theories, the work of Piaget, Vygotsky, and others helps to form the basis for constructivism. Newly evolving terminology is evident and includes a distinction among the "cognitive constructivism" and the "social constructivism."

Qualitative Interpretive Research Paradigms

Qualitative interpretive research paradigms have been influenced not only by anthropology but also by linguistics and philosophy. Selected examples regarding issues of multiculturalism include the Hawaiian KEEP

Project (Au & Jordan, 1981); the Warm Springs Indian reservation study viewing communication patterns in the classroom and the community (Philips, 1983); in-depth descriptions of family literacy and young children growing up in the inner city (Taylor & Dorsey-Gaines, 1988); Heath's (1983) "ways with words" study in the Carolina Piedmont detailing two children's learning communities; Swadener's (1988) ethnographic case study; Delpit's (1995) description of cultural conflicts in the classroom for African American children, often viewed as "other people's children"; and Wilcox's (1982) view of socioeconomic class differences. These researchers have noted differential treatment of young children and the schools' role in cultural transmission.

Wilcox (1982), for example, notes the differential treatment young children receive merely for having been born into a particular neighborhood and a particular socioeconomic class. In her study, she found:

> The pattern of differences . . . [is] directly in conflict with the promise of equal opportunity offered by the educational system in the United States. At the tender age of six, these children have done practically nothing as individuals to account for the kind of differential treatment they are receiving, except to have been born by chance into one neighborhood and social class background or another. (p. 295)

Swadener's (1988) earlier work called for an education that is multicultural in early childhood settings. This ethnographic case study conducted in two day-care programs helped Swadener to conclude that "interactions with racially and culturally diverse peers and teachers remains one of the best early childhood strategies for creating education that is multicultural" (p. 26).

Lisa Delpit (1995) has observed how our society maintains stereotypes, portrays young Black children negatively, and values the worldviews of those in privileged positions. Delpit underscores the combination of power and "otherness" by stating:

> We must all find some way to come to terms with these two issues (power and "otherness"). When we teach across the boundaries of race, class, or gender—indeed when we teach at all—we must recognize and overcome the power differential, the stereotypes, and the other barriers, which prevent us from seeing each other. . . . Until we can see the world as others see it, all the educational reforms in the world will come to naught. (p. 134)

Walsh, Tobin, and Graue (1993), in their extensive review of qualitative research in early childhood education, point to the importance of interpretive research in the field, since it holds the potential for collabora-

tive, negotiated relationships among players and the opportunity to give voice to children and practitioners who "historically have been silenced and isolated" (p. 473).

Bilingual/Bicultural Research

Bilingual/bicultural research has helped early childhood educators to value young children's home language and home culture. Researchers have shown that a strong home-language base facilitates not only second-language learning but also young children's emotional and academic well-being (Hakuta, 1986; Krashen, 1988; Soto, 1993, 1997c; Wong Fillmore, 1991). It is helpful to organize the bilingual education research studies into eras: (1) the bilingual "handicap" era; (2) the positive-findings era; (3) the era of newly evolving paradigms; and (4) the era with a futuristic vision that critically analyzes issues of power.

First, the bilingual "handicap" era denotes findings in keeping with the notion that bilingualism was synonymous with deficiency. The initial research is responsible for creating what Cummins (1989) refers to as the myth of the bilingual handicap. Hakuta (1986) notes that it is important to view this early literature in light of the historical context. Unfortunately, the research era of the 1920s through the early 1960s continues to drive existing programs, in spite of additional contemporary research.

Studies in the positive-findings era showed that children raised bilingually were more attentive to semantic relationships, showed superiority in awareness of linguistic rules and structures, outperformed monolinguals on a variety of measures of metalinguistic awareness, demonstrated divergent thinking and creativity, showed positive effects of bilingualism on a variety of cognitive performance measures such as concept formation, indicated positive effects on Piagetian conservation and field independence, demonstrated an ability to monitor cognitive performance, showed significant gains in cognitive measures including the Raven Progressive Matrices, and demonstrated that learning concepts in the native language will transfer and enhance second-language learning (Bain, 1974; Bain & Yu, 1980; Ben-Zeev, 1977; Cummins & Gulutsan, 1974; Cummins, 1978; Cummins, 1979; S. Duncan & DeAvila, 1979; Hakuta & Diaz, 1985; Ianco-Worrall, 1972; Liedtke & Nelson, 1968; Torrance, W., Gowan, & Alliotti, 1970).

The era of newly evolving paradigms has relied, to a greater extent, on qualitative methods and initiated ways of viewing issues of language and culture as related domains. Findings from this era have helped us to understand the effects of teacher assumptions about children's English-language proficiency on the quality of instruction (Moll & Diaz, 1987);

the importance of the distinction between social language skills and the more complex academic skills (Cummins, 1989); why the loss of the primary language can be costly to children, families, and society as a whole (Wong Fillmore, 1991); the long-term benefits of bilingual education programs on children's attitudes (Collier, 1989, 1992); and the need to incorporate "funds of knowledge" in the bilingual education classroom (Moll, 1995).

The field will continue to build on this knowledge base and evolve, explore, and experiment with research methods, theoretical frameworks, and alternate paradigms (Soto, 1992a, 1992b). Researchers are seeing the need for social science research to redirect itself from deficient stereotypical paradigms to exploratory and creative paradigms capable of meeting the needs of teachers, learners, and families. The research studies conducted by Ada (1986), Cummins (1996), and Soto (1997c), among others, can be viewed as initiating an era that includes a futuristic vision by critically analyzing issues of power in bilingual education. A critical bicultural pedagogy "holds the possibility for a discourse of hope in light of the tensions, conflicts, and contradictions that students must face in the process of their bicultural development" (Darder, 1991, p. 96). These researchers can envision an education that is built on a theory of cultural democracy and acknowledges issues of power.

Advocacy Research and Literature

Advocacy research and literature include multiple voices in the field and voices speaking on behalf of young children. These writings include research evidence (e.g., California Tomorrow on behalf of immigrant children), curricular literature (e.g., anti-bias, tolerance), demographic data (e.g., Children's Defense Fund, 1996), advocacy literature, and selected children's literature. Jonathan Kozol's (1991, 1995) work, for example, has served as a powerful ally in the advocacy literature. His willingness to portray the daily lived realities of children whose lives are disregarded continues to influence the "conscience" of Americans.

California Tomorrow's work, which originated on behalf of immigrant children, has evolved as a voice for California's young children. The report *Affirming Children's Roots* (Chang, 1993) features racially, culturally, and linguistically diverse child-care centers. This field research project targeted 450 child care centers in California. Included in these findings is the fact that children of color are significantly less likely to be cared for by teachers of their same racial background than White children. The researchers provide recommendations for further research, state agencies, the federal government, national early childhood professional organiza-

tions, resource and referral networks, training institutions, and private foundations.

In a subsequent study conducted by California Tomorrow (Chang, Muchelroy, Puledo-Tobiassen, Dowell, & Olsen Edwards, 1996), 300 child-care providers, trainers, and parents were interviewed, leading to principles based on their observations and their collaborations with participants. The five principles identified can be implemented in early childhood settings to prepare young children to "thrive in a multicultural world":

1. Combat racism and foster positive racial identity in young children.
2. Build on the cultures of families and promote respect and cross-cultural understanding among children.
3. Preserve family languages and encourage all children to learn a second language.
4. Work in partnership with families to respond to issues of race, language, and culture.
5. Engage in dialogue and reflection about race, language, and culture on an ongoing basis.

These researchers also see the need to broaden the research in early childhood education, since child development theory is built on the research conducted on White middle-class American children. New (1992, as cited in Chang) noted that only 9.3% of the research in the field of child development is devoted to non-Whites.

Marian Wright Edelman (Children's Defense Fund, 1996) has been an advocate and a powerful voice for young children via multiple publications and lobbying activities for more than two decades. The CDF yearly reports and the accompanying advocacy literature are valuable not only for early childhood professionals but also for parents and policy-making agencies. As we examine the daily realities children face in our nation, it will be important to reflect on Sharon Lynn Kagan's (1996) notion that professionals in our field need to stop viewing advocacy as leftist behavior.

Louise Derman-Sparks's (1989) *Anti-Bias Curriculum* has helped to inform early childhood educators for almost a decade. This guide includes resources, developmental guidelines, and ideas of empowerment based on Freire's "practice of freedom": "the means by which men and women deal critically and creatively with reality and discover how to participate in the transformation of the world" (cited in Derman-Sparks, 1989, p. ix).

Reconceptualizing Models

The dialogue initiated by Shirley Kessler and Beth Blue Swadener (1992) helps the field to examine ways of reconceptualizing the early childhood curriculum. Scholars from the reconceptualizing model include William Ayers, Marianne Block, Janice Hale, Jan Jipson, Nancy King, Shirley Kessler, Sally Lubeck, Janet Miller, Valerie Polakow, Lourdes Diaz Soto, Beth Blue Swadener, and many others. The scholars representing this paradigm realize how the field has been influenced by science, psychology, and child development theory. These early childhood educators envision alternative perspectives in both theory and practice; are willing to ask the difficult questions that have not previously been addressed; integrate multiple voices, especially the voices that have so often been disregarded; and draw from both the critical and feminist theories. They believe:

> If knowledge is power . . . , the nature of knowledge, as well as the practices that are valued or privileged in the early childhood curriculum, must be examined within a number of larger contexts as well as from multiple perspectives. In order to reconceptualize . . . we will need to become better listeners, . . . honor the voices, and . . . learn how to make the "familiar strange" and many of our prized assumptions problematic. (Kessler & Swadener, p. 293)

Scholars ascribing to the critical postmodern perspective are also helping to influence early childhood curriculum by integrating knowledge from critical constructivism, multiculturalism, Freire's (1970/1996) work, and feminist ways of knowing, and by examining issues of power, especially as these relate to popular culture. In *Kinderculture*, for example, Steinberg and Kincheloe (1997) expose the corporate construction of childhood in America. This volume examines early childhood taken-for-granted activities in the postmodern world of Disney movies, interactive video games, children's television viewing, eating at McDonald's, Barbie dolls, and dolls from the American Girl Collection.

In the chapter examining the *Mighty Morphin Power Rangers* (MMPR), McLaren and Morris (1997) point out that younger viewers have come to consider MMPR as a favorite and have made it the most highly rated children's television program. MMPR captures 99% of the 2– to 11–year-old viewers. This is an alarming statistic, especially when we learn what Peter McLaren heard during a telephone interview with a representative of the program. When McLaren asked

> if half-Korean and half-American meant Adam was Korean and possibly African, she said, No–he's American. Ask[ing] if Adam could be Korean and

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> perhaps Latino, I was given the same response. Apparently if you are Korean you are not American and if you are half-American that excludes you from being either African or Latino. American means one thing: being white. (p. 121)

The examination of how corporate America views children is important to our discussion of the early childhood curriculum since so many companies are invading children's lives at home and at school. Carpenter, Huston, and Spera (1989) found that children devoted more time to television than to any other activity except sleep, so it is crucial for the adults in children's lives to continue to critically analyze this situation. Is the consumer mentality with its preoccupation for material objects, neglect of humanistic caring perspectives, emphasis on psychological manipulation, and disregard for the environment benefiting children?

ADVOCATING FOR EQUITY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

How can the field move toward a place of equity and social justice in the multicultural worlds of childhood? Gaining insights from research, theories, and children's daily lived realities can guide the field to critically examine long-held practices and find a place of equity and social justice. Giroux (1992) uses the term *border crossings* when emphasizing the importance of solidarity among critical theorists, feminists, multiculturalists, and antiracist theorists. In curriculum theory, Slattery (1995) maintains, *crossing the border* "necessitates a commitment to postmodern democratic reform where subject-area disciplinary boundaries are traversed" (p. 31). Children, families, critical multiculturalists, early childhood advocates, proponents of dialogic-critical pedagogy, and keepers of traditional multicultural wisdom can help the nation to heal its historical past and alter its mean-spirited present. Only by maintaining solidarity will the field impact the complex daily realities young children and their families are facing. Only when the field moves beyond the rhetoric, beyond the fashion shows (Soto, 1997b), and beyond the genetically driven scientific epistemologies (Soto, 1997c) will the humanization and the liberation of child-care teachers, children, and families begin to evolve.

Cummins (1994, 1996) has shown how coercive power imposes oppression, abuse, inequity, and totalitarianism, and violates human rights and freedoms; while collaborative power affords democratic expression, human rights, and freedom. Our discussions can be strengthened by including notions of dialogic-critical pedagogy, critical multiculturalism, feminist ways of knowing, and reconceptualizing paradigms. The national

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rhetoric about young children and families has taken a mean-spirited tone, making it crucial for multiple voices to address reform. The need for collaborative power models that include teachers, students, and families is also underscored by Darder (1991): Schools "must work in collaboration with bicultural educators, students, parents, and their communities. Anything short of this effort suggests an educational process that is in danger of oppressing and disempowering students of color" (p. 121).

Are there explanations for the etiology of ethnocentrism, hate, and racism? Daniel Jonah Goldhagen (1997) indicates in his recent research that Hitler's willing executioners were ordinary people, ordinary Germans:

> My explanation—which is new to the scholarly literature on the perpetrators—is that the perpetrators, "ordinary Germans," were animated by anti-Semitism, by a particular type of anti-Semitism that led them to conclude that the Jews ought to die. . . . . The perpetrators having consulted their own convictions and morality and having judged the mass annihilation of Jews to be right, did not want to say "no." (p. 14)

The life of Janusz Korczak of Poland (Brendtro, Brokenleg, & Van Bockern, 1990) was also impacted by the Holocaust. Korczak was a writer, teacher, and the director of a school and orphanage for Jewish children of the street. His school was moved to the Warsaw Ghetto when the Nazis occupied Poland. He chose to remain with his 200 children, and when it became evident that he and his children would be sent to a death camp, "he prepared them for what was to come." They prepared a play based on Rabindrinath Tagore's *Post Office*, a story about a dying Hindu boy. The day the soldiers arrived they were dressed in their best and marched behind the biggest boy, who led them carrying a green flag. This children's parade made its way to the chlorinated boxcars and ultimately the gas chambers of Treblinka.

There are no buildings in the place where Korczak and his children met their death, only trees, grass, and a circle of stones. The only individual name on any one stone reads "Janusz and children," along with names of the cities and countries of the victims. A manuscript entitled *Ghetto Diary* was recovered by Korczak's friends from behind a brick wall in the children's home. He summarized the meaning of his life by stating, "I exist not to be loved and admired, but to love and to act."

There is no way of knowing all the challenges future generations will face, but we do have evidence that will guide us as we prepare our children for a life beyond the new millennium. At a time when so many of

us are concerned for our youth (e.g., violence, drugs, proliferation of hate groups and paramilitary groups), it seems crucial to learn collaboratively and in solidarity to critically analyze the oppressive elements in our lives within a dialogic-critical pedagogy as *border crossers* willing to gain wisdom from multiple groups and multiple ways of knowing.

A recent visit to New Mexico reminded me how little we have valued Native American traditions, for example. Members of the Cochiti family I met there have clear memories about the Carlisle Indian Industrial School in Pennsylvania, founded in 1879 by Captain Richard H. Pratt, whose motto was: "Kill the Indian and save the man." The process initiated by the "Carlisle School" included the loss of language, the loss of culture, the loss of family connections, and the loss of identity. This deliberate process of cultural invasion also led to cultural and linguistic genocide. The Cochiti families described how family members who returned home found it difficult to cope with and relate to their families and traditions.

Some Native American traditions offer the potential to ameliorate the many concerns Western/competitive, consumer-driven child-rearing practices have produced. Some traditional Native American wisdom may hold possibilities for the field. This is not intended to privilege Native American traditions over other diverse groups but merely to share the multitude of possibilities available as we begin to explore decades of child-rearing practices in multiculturalism in our *border crossing* journey. George Bluebird, a Lakota Sioux artist (in Brentro et al., 1990), portrays a Native American child-rearing philosophy by depicting a person standing in a circle surrounded by four directions. This Circle of Courage depicts four themes: belonging, mastery, independence, and generosity. The authors maintain that the Circle of Courage is not only a cultural belonging for Native Americans but also a cultural birthright for all children.

Selected Native American children's literature provides a rich possibility for viewing child-rearing practices that include attributes from the Circle of Courage. In *Shaman's Circle* (Wood & Howell, 1996), for example, life is depicted as a series of circles where harmony, continuity, the bonds with nature, and the need for personal meaning are evident. Excerpts from this book afford the opportunity for reflection for both children and adults:

> From my grandmother I learned courage, the kind needed to fight for what I believe in. From my grandfather I learned patience, the winter he went hungry so that our family could eat. . . . I was given the opportunity to exchange self importance for wisdom. (p. 33)

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Rainbows and their colors are important to the Navajo traditional culture, since rainbows are viewed as blessings. In *Rainbow at Night: The World in Words and Pictures by Navajo Children* (Hucko, 1996), the reader will find Navajo children's ideas about art and culture. The author notes that this book "is guided by the idea that if we all learn a little bit about each other's culture and ways of living, and treat each other with respect, then the world can be a better place" (p. 1). Next to the illustrations and children's photographs, the author suggests questions and activities that children and adults can share. The illustration "A Sunrise Girl," by Stephanie, for example, shows how the Navajo traditional culture can envision that every part of nature is related the way families are related. In the "Three Punk Birds," by Katherine, the importance of wild animals as a part of the natural world is depicted. In Melissa's illustration "Navajo Indians," we see what can happen when the connection between people and nature is broken, while Vanessa in "Weird Rug" shows the challenges children face as a part of the dilemma between modern life and traditional life.

In *The Magic of Spider Woman* (L. Duncan & Begay, 1996), a story is told about a legendary being who taught the Navajo how to weave blankets in order to survive the winters. This teaching tale depicts a most basic value—our need for a well-balanced life. How many of us would be leading healthier and happier lives if our early childhood curriculum had included this concept? The legendary figure reminds us that, "It is good to take pride in our work but we must not allow that pride to become master of our spirits" (p. 36).

There are many Native American stories that are considered sacred since they are a part of religious traditions to which the people who tell them belong. Sometimes Coyote plays a role in the religious stories, but at other times the coyote stories are told for entertainment. The Coyote stories do not belong to any single tribe and can be found throughout the people of the U.S. West. The stories can change from tribe to tribe, from storyteller to storyteller, so that each story may have multiple versions based on the storytellers' imagination and the inspiration of the old stories.

Coyote Goes Walking (Pohrt, 1995) is an example of this genre, in which Coyote has obtained a prominent role as a mythical figure in the oral tradition that stretches back to prehistory and continues among contemporary families. *Coyote and the Winnowing Birds* (Sekaquaptewa & Pepper, 1994), which is illustrated by Hopi children, is a story that helps to address issues of home language and culture with a notable lesson, "always be happy with yourself just the way you are" (p. 62). This story

may stimulate interest in bilingualism and may help to integrate issues of identity and belonging.

A spirit of mutual caring is a key to eliminating many of the complex problems our children face as we try hard to reach a place that is humanizing and liberating, and as we begin to abandon bureaucratic educational notions and mythic quantifiable scientific paradigms. A successful community incorporates collaborative power models with shared beliefs, values, and ceremonies. In solidarity we can mend the circle of courage and sow the seeds of encouragement. It seems more important than ever that we collectively arm ourselves with wisdom as early childhood *border crossers*. Native American traditions, and other traditions, can help us to examine our legacy for future generations. Not only have genetic, scientific, developmentalist epistemologies disregarded issues of power and traditional multicultural wisdom, but we have allowed them to rule our lives. Smith (1995) notes that it is "a signal feature of our century's close that we recognize that this turn to science was mistaken. Not entirely mistaken. . . . What was mistaken was to expect science to answer ultimate questions, for its method doesn't connect with them" (p. 10). Smith adds that "modern science . . . must be reassessed in light of the changing times and the continuing struggle for social justice. But if we single out [the scientists'] conclusions about reality and how life should be lived, they begin to look like the winnowed wisdom of the human race" (p. 246). As early childhood educators the "winnowed wisdom of the human race" has certainly impacted our profession, but we need not lose hope. As professionals who have for so long imagined a utopian world of equity, we can join in solidarity the many voices, the like-minded voices, the disregarded voices willing to critically examine, dialogue, border cross, and advocate on behalf of young children.

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